



SOCIAL SECURITY INFORMATION CENTER

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STRENGTHENING SOCIAL SECURITY: WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

Secretary Snow Launches '60 Stops in 60 Days' Tour: "U.S. Treasury Secretary John Snow kicked off a nationwide tour Thursday in Arkansas intended to shore up flagging support for President Bush's Social Security plan, reassuring senior citizens and the youngest of workers that the plan will take care of them ... Retirees, the disabled, widows and survivors should have no worries under the president's plan, the treasury secretary said Thursday. 'The basic safety net will not only be preserved — it will be strengthened,' Snow told reporters. 'We call it retiring with dignity.'" (Tracie Dungan, "Snow at UA exalts Social Security plan," *Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, 3/4/05)

Fact Check.org Sets Record Straight On 'Windfalls': "New information turned up by FactCheck.org shows that the type of private Social Security accounts being proposed by President Bush would yield very little profit to the securities industry, contrary to persistent claims of a potentially huge "windfall" to Wall Street. What we have discovered is that the model for Bush's accounts -- the Federal Thrift Savings Plan for federal workers -- actually paid securities firms a net total of only 16 cents for every \$10,000 in workers accounts. The TSP had refused to make that information public -- until now. It shows that fees actually being paid to Wall Street are hundreds of times smaller than some critics had assumed."

Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan Calls For Fixing Social Security: "I fear that we may have already committed more physical resources to the baby boom generation in its retirement years than our economy has the capacity to deliver. If existing promises need to be changed, those changes should be made sooner rather than later." (Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, Testimony to the Committee on the Budget, U.S. House of Representatives, 3/2/05)

Senate Majority Leader Calls For A Bill This Year: "This President and this Congress are facing this challenge and the challenge is to fix Social Security for seniors, for near retirees, and for the next generation. We need to do it this year ... The assurances of Social Security should be guaranteed. To be able to guarantee those assurances, we must diagnose the problem and then we must act. We must govern with meaningful solutions, and that is exactly what this Congress will do." (Senator Bill Frist, M.D., "Statement on Social Security," 3/3/05)

Secretary Gutiérrez Says Strengthening Social Security 'Un debate importante para los latinos': "Para la población latina, el debate sobre el Seguro Social será sumamente importante, ya que los hispanos dependen más del sistema que muchos otros estadounidenses. En nuestra comunidad, casi 40% de los beneficiarios hispanos dependen del Seguro Social como su fuente principal de ingresos, y tres de cada cuatro dependen del sistema para mitad, o más de sus ingresos. El presidente Bush reconoce la importancia del sistema para los hispanoamericanos." (Op-ed, Secretary Carlos M. Gutiérrez, *La Opinion*, 3/3/05)

Democrat Sam Beard Calls for Parties To Put Aside Partisanship And Work For Solutions: "As a Democrat, I'm concerned that Social Security reform is turning into a partisan political issue at a time when we need a bipartisan effort to save Social Security and to address a severe savings problem, as two-thirds of Americans have limited or no savings. We must save Social Security and improve retirement savings for all generations ... It's important to remember that President Bill Clinton wanted Social Security reform and personal retirement accounts to be part of his legacy ... The reforms considered by Clinton and Bush both take aim at the same two retirement issues: the growing imbalance in the Social Security program and the fact that nearly two-thirds of Americans have no or limited savings. Both presidents envision allowing younger workers to set aside \$1,000 a year, out of taxes they already pay, in personal retirement accounts. Payment of Social Security taxes would still be required, but part of those taxes would create the personal accounts." (Op-ed, Sam Beard, *The Star-Ledger*, 3/4/05)

Younger Workers Back Bush Plan For Private Accounts: “Younger Americans ... tend to like Bush’s call to let them invest their tax dollars in markets. The poll by the Pew Research Center said that 66 percent of those ages 18-29 support private accounts, up from 64 percent in December.” (Steven Thomma, “Young adults back Bush on Social Security,” Knight Ridder newspapers, 3/3/05)

Senator Corzine Says Problems Facing Social Security: “We’re not against solving the problem that [Sen.] John [Sununu (R-NH)] and I both acknowledge exists in Social Security. All Democrats do,” said Sen. Corzine (D-NJ). (Sen. Jon Corzine, CBS’ “Face The Nation,” 2/27/05)

Senator Santorum Heralds A ‘Moment of Truth’: “If we act now, we can establish personal retirement accounts and lessen the need for painful alternatives down the road. Personal retirement accounts offer new hope to young workers — hope that they will not be burdened with massive tax increases, painful benefit cuts or both. This is the moment for Social Security reform. This is the moment to ensure retirement security not only for current retirees but for future generations as well.” (Op-ed, Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA), The Hill, 3/1/05)

Senator Biden Willing To Listen: “I am ready, willing, and able to listen to anything the President has to put on the table about the issue of how he is going to deal with the solvency of Social Security,” said Sen. Biden (D-DE). (Sen. Joseph Biden, NBC’s “Meet The Press,” 2/27/05)

Senator McCain Calls Both Sides To The Table: “I think my constituents want us to sit down together and stop demagoguing the issue. I think that the Democrats owe it to us to stop demagoguing and sit down and seriously negotiate. There’s not going to be the same benefits 30 years from now or 20 years from now for working Americans, and we better sit down and work together and come to an agreement.” (Senator John McCain (R-AZ), FOX News Sunday, 2/27/05)

USA Today Founder Al Neuharth Warns ‘Don’t be fooled by Social Security fibs’: “His [President Bush’s] wise second-term plan for a partial privatization of Social Security, if he succeeds, will make us grateful for generations to come. We older folks (55 and over) won’t be affected. But our children and grandchildren could elect to invest some of their Social Security tax in stocks and bonds for a much higher payout when they retire than the system’s current Treasury bill holdings produce. Based on all historical economic and investment data, the privatization aspect of Bush’s Social Security proposal is that sure and simple. Don’t let any fibbers fool you.” (Op-ed, Al Neuharth, USA Today, 3/3/05)

Cincinnati Enquirer Editorial Board Says Social Security Not A Partisan Issue: “Social Security is no partisan issue. It affects us all. Reforms are particularly noteworthy for those just entering the workforce, who will be paying for the generational bulge of the baby boomers ... By 2018, the Social Security Trust Fund will pay out more in benefits than it collects in payroll taxes. And by 2042, the fund technically will be dry ... There are varying opinions about the future of Social Security, but it’s important that we listen to well-reasoned arguments and gathering as much information as we can, so that when the time comes we can make wise, informed choices.” (Editorial, The Cincinnati Enquirer, 2/27/05)

An Odd Couple: “In the political Odd Coupling of 2005, MTV’s Rock the Vote has joined forces with AARP. Their mission: Block efforts to let young workers invest some of their Social Security taxes in personal retirement accounts. ... The AARP/RTV report on ‘Public Attitudes Toward Social Security and Private Accounts’ is based on a survey of 1,000 adults. ... The poll informed respondents: ‘Some people propose allowing workers to invest some of their Social Security payroll taxes in the stock market through individual retirement accounts. For the average worker, this portion could be up to \$1,300 per year that [he] could invest.’ Then came the question: ‘In general, do you favor or oppose this approach?’ Again, two-thirds of the under-40 crowd got it ‘wrong.’ They liked the approach President Bush advocates — the very approach opposed by the self-anointed voice of American youth, Rock the Vote. ... Neither AARP nor RTV wants to hear what their constituents think. Both groups are far more interested in telling their constituents what they should think — whether they like it or not.” (Rea Hederman, “MTV Poll Masks Youth Views on Social Security,” FOX News.com, 2/28/05)

Minnesota’s Rep. Kennedy Wants Parity For Younger Workers: “We must offer younger workers generational fairness in benefits. They deserve the same opportunity for a secure retirement, which is why I believe we should explore options, like personal accounts, for younger workers who want them. It’s going to be a long process of finding common sense solutions to Social Security’s problems. But I’m hopeful we can begin by sitting down in a bipartisan way, free of political scare tactics, and save Social Security for all generations.” (Op-ed, Rep. Mark Kennedy (R-MN), “Social Security Needs Long Term Fix,” St. Cloud Times, 3/1/05)